

**Town Meeting Coordinating Committee
Minutes of December 7, 2007 Meeting**

1. The meeting began at 1:35pm in the first floor meeting room of Town Hall.
Present: All TMCC members: Harry Brooks, Carol Gray, Phil Jackson, Stephanie O'Keeffe, Peggy Roberts, Judy Simpson & Otto Stein.
2. **Review of prior minutes:**
 - a. Minutes from Oct. 18, 2007: After edits were made, Phil moved to accept the minutes as amended, Stephanie seconded, and all voted in favor.
 - b. Minutes from October 22, 2007: Edits were made and the minutes were approved.

Carol proposed that for future minutes, she would not list every typo or word change to the minutes in the minutes. Rather, she would note as many as possible, then email those to Peggy to assist her in doing the edits, but they would not be part of the overall minutes for that meeting. The sense of the group was that that would be fine.

3. Reviews of TMCC Pre-Town Meeting Events:

Warrant Review: Judy said she found the Warrant Review extremely helpful. She pointed out that Howard Ewert had watched the Warrant Review on ACTV the morning of the precinct meeting he hosted. Peggy said there was an error in filming the Warrant Review. Stephanie said the filming of the warrant review by ACTV started on article 4.

Peggy said the ACTV director was very helpful about adding more airing times of the Warrant Review at more convenient times of day. Carol said about 40 evaluations were collected at the Warrant Review and almost all answered they found it helpful. Many evaluations commented on the overhead projector not working. Harry said the technician was at the warrant review but then left before the program began. Peggy pointed out the hand microphones were also missing. Carol said it would be helpful to have someone from our committee designated as being responsible for each particular aspect of a program. Phil suggested we have an event checklist.

Peggy said one thing that occurred to her from thinking back a year ago was whether we should do orientation of new members at the same time as the warrant. Regarding mechanics, Otto thought the League should continue to handle the substance of the warrant review and new member orientation with TMCC just handling the logistics.

Someone mentioned that the attendance at the warrant review can look a little sparse even with a turnout of 40 or more because it's in the auditorium. Judy suggested we ribbon off the back seats so that people sit up toward the front.

Judy said maybe a disc from the warrant review could be available to sign out from the library. Carol said we could have a TMCC shelf at the library with archives from past

years. Harry said ACTV is able to burn discs for people. Otto suggested we use part of our budget to have CD's burned of all these events.

Judy suggested there be a mentoring program with experienced TM members paired up with new members. Otto thinks the format of being no advocacy and limited Q&A at the warrant review be in place only if precinct meetings are strengthened so people will have the space to hear perspectives and ask questions. Judy asked for mentoring to be put on the next meeting's agenda. Peggy pointed that there's a problem of there being the equivalent of two political parties in this town. Harry pointed out that some people who are new members don't know the logistics of TM so they don't make the motion they want to make first, so they lose their chance to make a motion simply because they don't know the process. Phil said it's helpful to have the moderator do an overview for new people and to have explanations of ground rules (like all budget motions in writing).

Carol said the mentors could be instructed to not talk about politics and instead discuss logistics based on a memo that TMCC could draft. There was discussion of having a fact sheet.

Bus Tour: Otto said he saw it on TV and thought it was great. Other people said they heard good things about it. Peggy said she almost got bus sick because the camera was moving and trees would flash by. It was reported that several people seemed to learn a lot from the TV coverage. Otto said he thought Mary did a good job keeping it neutral. Stephanie thought it was less good than previous bus tours. She found it to be a lot less neutral and a lot less informative. There was less hard information provided to people. People were trying to figure things out by everyone chiming in about the articles. Peggy said because it was raining and people separated out, there were pros and cons of articles discussed in different groups.

Harry said we could increase attendance on the bus tour if we had two sides of each article present for the bus tour to provide different perspectives. Judy suggested instead of hiring a bus, we could pay an ACTV camera person and a speaker to show the sites and provide a narration. Carol said the bus tour itself was an important part of Town Meeting since there was no substitute for seeing the site oneself and since the bus tour was a good way to build community within Town Meeting allowing people with different perspectives to get to know each other better outside of the traditional Town Meeting format.

There was discussion about TMCC interacting more with ACTV. Carol suggested we send a thank you to ACTV for covering the bus tour and Peggy said she would do so. Carol also suggested we pass along feedback to ACTV about what people said about the bus tour (e.g., about filming when the bus went from place to place). Otto said maybe ACTV would have suggestions as well. Harry mentioned at one point that TMCC could invite the ACTV Executive Director to one of our TMCC meetings to discuss things like this.

Precinct Meetings: Judy said she liked the idea of having precinct meetings. Carol said the feedback from the precinct meetings based on the evaluation forms and oral feedback was very favorable. She read some of the comments from the Precinct 7&8 meeting.

Judy asked what happened to the idea of having facilitators at the precinct meetings. Someone said we couldn't get people to do it. There was discussion of how in early years, right after the Charter, TMCC was trying to stay believable by being neutral. There were petitioners who came to the precinct meetings and advocated for their articles. Harry said, the year before we said we were going to be completely neutral, we invited people from both sides. Otto said he was amazed how available planning board people were to come to speak at the warrant review.

Stephanie noted that it would be helpful for TMCC to put together a packet of what TMCC offers so every precinct has a shared expectation of TMCC's role. The packet could be provided to each precinct coordinator.

Discussing turnout, Carol said that perhaps precincts that tend to have lower turnout could meet together so there would be a decent-sized group of people and people would learn more. Carol moved that we set up a subcommittee to work on precinct meetings. Harry seconded it and the vote was unanimous. Carol volunteered to be on it and asked if anyone else wanted to be on it. Peggy said we could deal with that later.

Zoning Orientation:

Peggy asked if people had ideas about other types of forums we could host. Judy suggested the school budget. Harry thought that was a great idea. Carol agreed and said it would be helpful to learn more about the funds for capital expenditures and how the schools have their own separate reserves. Judy proposed this be in the same format of the zoning orientation. Otto mentioned that there's the issue about independence of the school committee. Peggy pointed out that the schools are active about trying to get enrichment programs, but there are other factions concerned about policies that bring programs for special ed., etc.

Several people brought up other possible topics for educational forums: Carol mentioned CPAC, Stephanie suggested a forum on how the capital plan could work & Harry mentioned the library budget.

Open Meeting Law: Carol suggested that the discussion of the Open Meeting Law be saved until the next meeting when Phil was here (since he had had to leave early during that meeting).

The next meeting was set for the second Thurs. in Jan. 10 at 1:30pm.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.